

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 5, 7-11, 13, 15-20 and 22-24 are in the application, with Claims 1, 5, 11, 13, 15, 16, 18 and 19 having been amended, and with Claims 4, 6, 12, 14 and 21 having been cancelled. Claims 1, 11 and 18 are the independent claims herein. No new matter has been added. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication of allowable subject matter with respect to prior Claims 6, 8, 9, 14, 15, 21 and 22. The present Amendment amends independent Claims 1, 11 and 18 to recite the subject matter of Claims 6, 14 and 21, respectively, and to place the remaining claims in proper form for allowance. Accordingly, it is believed that the present Amendment requires only a cursory review by the Examiner and should be entered in accordance with M.P.E.P. §714.13.

Applicants also submit that the outstanding rejections are rendered moot by the above amendments. All pending claims are therefore believed to be allowable, and withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

The outstanding Office Action presents a number of characterizations regarding the applied references, some of which are not directly addressed herein because they are not related to the rejections of the independent claims. Applicants do not necessarily agree with the characterizations and reserve the right to discuss those characterizations.

For at least the reasons given above, it is submitted that the entire application is in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience. Alternatively, if there remains any question regarding the present application or any of the cited references, or if the Examiner has any further suggestions for expediting allowance of the present application, the Examiner is kindly invited to contact the undersigned via telephone at (203) 972-0049.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date



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